

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-06 EUR-08 INR-05 NSC-05

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R 091000Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9235

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 0062

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT SU

SUBJ: OUTLOOK FOR NIMEIRI REGIME

SUMMARY. DESPITE ITS LONGEVITY, NIMEIRI REGIME CONTINUING
ENCOUNTER PROBLEMS IN SEEKING BROADEN BASE ITS
SUPPORT. REGIME NEVERTHELESS BENEFITS FROM ABSENCE
VIALE ALTERNATIVE AND IS SEEKING BUTTRESS ITS POSITION

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BY PAYING CLOSER ATTENTION INTERNAL SECURITY WHILE PUSHING

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. END SUMMARY.

1. AS SUDAN ENTERS 1975 AFTER ALMOST SIX YEARS OF NIMEIRI RULE, HIS REGIME CONTINUES ITS MAN-ON-BICYCLE ACT OF SEEKING GIVE SUFFICIENT ILLUSION OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS TO FORESTALL SERIOUS DOMESTIC UNREST AGAINST THE DAY -- HOPEFULLY IN A YEAR OR TWO -- WHEN FRUITS PROJECTS CURRENTLY BEING INITIATED SHOULD BEGIN RIPEN.

2. TO THIS END, PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN OBTAINING OUTSIDE FINANCING FOR NEW PROJECTS AT CONCESSIONAL RATES (KHARTOUM A-01 NOTAL), AND NIMEIRI IS CURRENTLY EMBARKED ON MAJOR CORNERSTONE LAYING AND PROJECT INAUGURATION EXERCISE THROUGHOUT EIGHT PROVINCES. REGIME HAS ALSO SOUGHT TAKE STEAM OUT OF DOMESTIC CRITICISM OF COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC WOES BY: (A) GIVING GOS WORKERS ONE MONTH'S ADVANCE AT TIME JANUARY INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY, REPAYABLE OVER CY 75; (B) AWARDED OR ORDAINING ACROSS-THE-BOARD PAY INCREASES; AND (C) DONATING --BY NIMEIRI HIMSELF-- LS100,000 TO RAILWAY UNION. REGIME THUS APPEARS FULLY CONSCIOUS THAT ITS ACTIVE SUPPORT--AS OPPOSED TO PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE--REMAINS NARROW. EFFORTS BREATHE LIFE INTO SINGLE PARTY SSU ARE CONTINUING AS ARE UP-BEAT ARTICLES IN CONTROLLED PRESS. THESE TACTICS DO NOT FOOL SOPHISTICATED SUDANESE BUT MANY APPARENTLY SEE NO BETTER ALTERNATIVE TO PRESENT REGIME. AS ONE SOURCE TOLD AMBASSADOR RECENTLY: "WE HAVE TRIED POLITICIANS. THEY FAILED. WE HAVE TRIED ARMY--TWICE. IT DIFFICULT SEE WHERE ANY NEW SOURCE LEADERSHIP WOULD COME FROM."

3. CONSTANTLY ALERT TO PROBLEMS ARMY LOYALTY, NIMEIRI ASSUMED POST MINDEF LAST NOV (KHARTOUM 2509 NOTAL) AMID MUCH PUBLICITY RE UNCOVERING ALLEGED MILITARY COUP PLOT FOR WHICH NINE NCOS ALREADY CONVICTED IN OPEN COURT (KHARTOUM A-129 NOTAL). SOME CIRCLES SEE FORMER UMMA PRIMIN SADIQ AL-MAHDI AS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE NIMEIRI BUT IT DIFFICULT SEE HOW CIVILIANS COULD RETURN TO POWER EXCEPT IN WAKE MILITARY COUP. IN ANY CASE, SADIQ AND OTHER FORMER POLITICOS HAVE BEEN IN EXILE FOR CONSIDERABLE PERIOD AND APPEAR LARGELY NEUTRALIZED IN PART

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THROUGH REGIMES BUILD-UP OF HIS UNCLE, AHMED EL-MAHDI. KHARTOUM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, WHO IN PAST SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE AGITATION, HAVE BEEN QUIET FOR MONTHS, SUGGESTING THEY MAY HAVE LEARNED LESSON THAT OFF-CAMPUS DEMONSTRATIONS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. LABOR UNIONS ARE UNDER FIRM CONTROL SSU. ECONOMIC WOES CONTINUE DRAW CRITICISM BUT EVEN LAST MONTHS NEAR DOUBLING OF SUGAR PRICE WAS CARRIED OFF BY REGIME WITH NOTHING MORE THAN MINOR DEMONSTRATION.

4. SIGNS NEVERTHELESS SUGGEST NIMEIRI REGIME LESS CONFIDENT THAN FORMERLY. WHILE PRESIDENT'S WELL-EARNED REPUTATION FOR TOUGHNESS HAS AGAIN BEEN ILLUSTRATED IN GOS HANDLING DISTURBANCES AND ALLEGED PLOTS, THERE HAVE BEEN OFFSETTING GESTURES NO DOUBT INTENDED PROPITIATE LOCAL OPINION. THESE INCLUDE: BELATED PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS TO EXPLAIN JONGLEI SCHEME AND SUGAR PRICE INCREASE; RESTRAINT IN EXPULSION OF ILLEGAL AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN SUGAR PRICE DEMONSTRATIONS (ONE SOURCE CLAIMS ONLY 170 NIGERIANS EXPELLED OUT OF OVER 2 MILLION HERE); NIMEIRI WILLINGNESS PERSONALLY RECEIVE GRIEVANCE PETITIONS FROM ANGRY STUDENTS; AND WELL-PUBLICIZED EXHORTATIONS TO THE CONTROLLED PRESS NOT TO CONCEAL BAD NEWS. NO DOUBT TO RALLY SUPPORT, PRESIDENT ALSO TOOK NOTABLY HARDER PUBLIC LINE ON PALESTINE IN INDEPENDENCE SPEECH (KHARTOUM 0009 NOTAL), WHILE FOR FIRST TIME IN SOME YEARS, GOS INDEPENDENCE DAY TV PROGRAM HAILED ROLE OLD-LINE PARTIES IN ACHIEVING SUDANESE INDEPENDENCE.

5. IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIME CONTINUES EARNEST ESPOUSAL STANDARD ARAB/AFRICAN POLICIES BUT EFFORTS ASSURE THAT SUDAN GAINS PROGRESSIVELY GREATER MEASURE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION HAVE MET WITH ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS. NIMEIRI'S ATTEMPTS GAIN STATURE BY "MEDIATING" QADHAFI/SADAT AND PMAC/ELF ISSUES SO FAR HAVE FLOPPED. WHILE PRESIDENT FORD'S ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE AND EARLIER RETURN OF AMBASSADOR WERE WELL PUBLICIZED HERE, GOS ATTITUDE TOWARD USG REMAINS AMBIVALENT DUE TO OUR FAILURE RESUME SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE AND OUR POSITION ON ARAB/ISRAELI ISSUE.

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6. FACED WITH THESE CONTINUING INTERNAL CHALLENGES AND EXTERNAL DISAPPOINTMENTS, EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT NIMEIRI REGIME IN MONTHS AHEAD: (A) WILL HAVE TO PAY INCREASING ATTENTION TO DOMESTIC SECURITY SITUATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IF IT IS TO SET NEW RECORDS FOR LONGEVITY SUDANESE REGIME NEXT MAY; AND (B) INTENDS TO DO JUST THAT.
BREWER

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